

REMARKS

In the July 14, 2008 Office Action, claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 14, and 15 stand rejected in view of prior art, while claims 3-8, 11-13, and 16-20 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Claims 3-7, 11-13, and 16-20 were rejected for failing to indicate and claim particularly and distinctly the subject matter that Applicants regard as the invention. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the July 14, 2008 Office Action, Applicants have amended claims 1, 4, 6-13, and 17, and have canceled claims 2, 3, 14, 15, 19, and 20 as indicated above. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. Thus, claims 1, 4-13, and 16-18 are pending, with claim 1 and 8 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of above amendments and the following comments.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §112

In item 2 of the Office Action, claims 3-7, 11-13, and 16-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In response, Applicants have amended claims canceled claims 3, 19, and 20, and have amended claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 12, 13, and 17 to clarify claims 4-7, 11-13, and 16-18.

Specifically, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite the limitations of claim 3 and have amended claims 7, 12, and 17 such that these claims recite that the joint main body has a split part. As seen in Figures 2(a) and 2(b) and explained in written disclosure of the present application, Applicants respectfully assert that present application discloses a joint main body

1 having a split part, 5a being separated by 5b. Applicants respectfully assert that the aforementioned referencing of the written disclosure and Figures of the present application is to show an example and not to limit the claims.

Applicants have amended claim 4 to recite that the first inclined surface and the second inclined surface are respectively declined and inclined toward a direction of insertion into the joining hole. Further, Applicants have amended claim 4 to recite that the second inclined surface connects to the first inclined surface at the split-level part such that the outer diameter of the first inclined surface at the split-level part is smaller than the outer diameter of the second inclined surface at the split level part. As seen in Figures 1 and 3, Applicants respectfully assert that the present application discloses a first inclined surface 32 and a second inclined surface 34 that respectively decline and incline toward a direction of insertion A and connect such that the outer diameter of the first inclined surface at the split-level part is smaller than the outer diameter of the second inclined surface at the split level part. Applicants respectfully assert that the aforementioned referencing of the Figures of the present application is to show an example and not to limit the claims.

Applicants believe that the claims now comply with 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

In item 4 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 9, and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,586,731 (Castrup). In response, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to define the present invention over the prior art of record, and have canceled claims 2 and 14.

In particular, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite the limitations of claim 3. In item 8 of the Office Action, it was stated that claim 3 contains allowable subject matter, and Applicants agree. Thus, Applicants believe that claim 1 is allowable. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Moreover, Applicants believe that dependent claims are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claim 1, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Also, the dependent claims are further allowable because they include additional limitations. Thus, Applicants believe that since the prior art of record does not anticipate the independent claim 1, neither does the prior art anticipate the dependent claims.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

In item 6 of the Office Action, claims 10 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,586,731 (Castrup). In response, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 as mentioned above, and have canceled claim 15.

More specifically, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite the limitations of claim 3. In item 8 of the Office Action, it was stated that claim 3 contains allowable subject matter, and Applicants agree. Thus, Applicants believe that claim 1 is allowable. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Moreover, Applicants believe that dependent claim 10 is also allowable over the prior art of record in that it depends from independent claim 1, and therefore is allowable for the

reasons stated above. Also, the dependent claim is further allowable because it includes additional limitations. Thus, Applicants believe that since the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest the invention as set forth in independent claim 1, the prior art of record also fails to disclose or suggest the inventions as set forth in the dependent claim.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn in view of the above comments and amendments.

Allowable Subject Matter

In item 7 of the Office Action, claim 8 was indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Further, in item 8 of the Office Action, claims 3-7, 11-13, and 16-20 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. In response, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite the limitations of claim 3, have amended claim 8 to place it in independent form, and have canceled claims 2, 3, 14, 15, 19, and 20. Thus, independent claims 1 and 8 are believed to be allowable.

Prior Art Citation

In the Office Action, additional prior art references were made of record. Applicants believe that these references do not render the claimed invention obvious.

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Appl. No. 10/564,153
Amendment dated October 8, 2008
Reply to Office Action of July 14, 2008

In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 1, 4-13, and 16-18 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

/Todd M. Guise/
Todd M. Guise
Reg. No. 46,748

SHINJYU GLOBAL IP COUNSELORS, LLP
1233 Twentieth Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202)-293-0444
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